

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel), a longtime animal rights advocate, introduced a bill this week aimed at cracking down on high-volume, commercial dog breeding operations.

"The conditions in some U.S. dog breeding facilities are absolutely appalling," said Rep. Sam Farr. "Hundreds of dogs are often crammed into overcrowded, filthy cages with no chance for exercise or social contact. That these facilities are allowed to remain open is a stain on humanity and goes against the very grain of our society's norms."

While the Animal Welfare Act applies to breeders who sell to pet stores, the law's pre-Internet language creates a massive loophole for these puppy mills, which are considered "retail pet stores" because they sell directly to consumers, and are thus exempt from regulation.

The Puppy Uniform Protection and Safety Act, known as the PUPS Act, will close this loophole and ensure more humane treatment of dogs. The bill (H.R. 6949) will require that all dog breeders who sell directly to the public and who sell more than 50 dogs per year be federally licensed and inspected. The legislation will also mandate that dogs in commercial breeding facilities be given the opportunity to walk and exercise for 60 minutes a day.

"We commend Rep. Farr for his dedication to eradicating the scourge of puppy mills in California and across the United States," said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States. "For too long, large commercial breeders selling tens of thousands of puppies over the Internet have escaped the bare minimum regulations under the Animal Welfare Act. Rep. Farr's bill will ensure that all our best friends are afforded a level playing field for humane treatment and exercise."

As a member of the California State Assembly, Farr authored state-level legislation regulating puppy mills. When enacted, the law set significant standards for the industry that continue today.

"How we treat those weaker than we are tells us a lot about who we are as a

society," Rep. Farr said. "If we allow dogs to be abused and mistreated, it tells me that we aren't doing a very good job. We owe man's best friend a lot better than this."

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